

US/Australia Plant Quarantine Discussions

**March 13-14, 2003
Canberra, Australia**

Australia Participants:

Dr. Brian Stynes, General Manager, Plant Biosecurity
Chris Hood, Senior Manager, Plant Biosecurity
Jeanine Crowther, AQIS, Manager – Horticulture Program
David Letham, Manager, Oceania, Europe, and Africa, Plant Biosecurity
Rob McGahy, AQIS Horticulture Exports Program
Dr. Bronwyn Wiseman, Plant Biosecurity
Bill Magee, Senior Manager, Plant Bioscurity

U.S. Participants:

Karen Ackerman, APHIS, PPQ, PIM Director for Oceania
Dennis Hannapel, APHIS, IS, Director for Oceania
Mike Guidici Pietro, APHIS, PPQ Trade Specialist, San Francisco

U.S. Issues:

California Table Grapes

Australia and the United States met to consider proposed changes to the quarantine regime that included provisions for the adoption of technically equivalent measures for the 2003 export season. The following outcomes jointly developed during the technical meeting will provide the basis for consultations with respective industries in advance of the 2003 export season:

1. Fumigation On Arrival in Australia

There will be an inspection in California for noxious weeds and quarantine pests. If quarantine pests are found during inspection in California then the grape shipment will not be forwarded to Australia for treatment. In Australia, only chamber fumigations will be allowed with a suitable, secure containment regime developed by AQIS prior to treatment. An AQIS-supervised treatment in Australia will typically not require a follow up inspection in Australia.

2. Sample Size

An adjustment from a 920 bunch sample to a 600 bunch sample

3. Tolerance for Missing Box Stamps

Box stamping requirements will only be necessary for consignments consisting of individual boxes and not complete pallets. Procedures will be developed by AQIS to deal with missing box stamps on a case-by-case basis.

4. Fumigation Lot Vs. Inspection Lot

Fumigation lots conducted within a 36-hour period may be combined into one inspection lot if consistent treatment procedures are followed from the same treatment facility.

5. Fumigation Dosage

An adjustment in fumigation schedules to align with Australian standard treatment schedule.

6. Fumiscope Readings/Methyl Bromide Concentration Measurements

The respective quarantine services in both Australia and the US will follow their normal standard operating procedures to certify treatment facilities and measure gas concentrations in methyl bromide treatments. For new treatment facilities in California, an initial gas concentration reading will be required for the first commercial treatment.

7. Replacement of Sample Boxes

Additional boxes from the inspection lot may be used to replace inspected boxes. Providing consistency is maintained for the replacement boxes and they are prepared under the same conditions, individual boxes within the pallet will not have to be stamped with the pallet tag number.

Florida Citrus

Comments from Issues Paper are final and will be incorporated into the Draft IRA which is expected to be released in June 2003.

California and Northwest Stone Fruit

This is APHIS and BA's first priority for an IRA. The IRA will be initiated as soon as adequate BA resources are available to do so.

Idaho Sweet Corn for Sowing

BA provided clarifications on the import requirements in the IRA. BA will provide information on alternative diagnostic testing procedures for High Plains Virus and Maize Dwarf Mosaic Virus, if available.

US Cherries

Treatment temperature harmonization: BA agrees, in principle, to authorize a lowering of the temperature to 6 degrees C, but is awaiting a CSIRO opinion before proceeding. BA will provide a response in advance of the 2003 export season.

Pest interceptions: Higher live pest detections for California fruit than Pacific Northwest fruit, primarily mites. The reasons for these detections are unclear. APHIS will coordinate a technical visit to Australia for an APHIS pest identification expert to develop a cooperative exchange.

Extension of market access to Western Australia – APHIS will provide a written request.

US Apples

BA will provide a response to APHIS' updated request for access of March 7, 2003, in due course.

Irradiated Papayas from Hawaii

BA requested that APHIS provide research data on the effectiveness of irradiation against the fruit flies from Hawaii, and recommend appropriate dosages. Upon evaluation of that information, BA would undertake the required policy review and eventually issue a Policy Memorandum authorizing imports. GM papayas would require examination by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator.

Australia Issues

Australian Cherries (Mainland)

BA will provide information on two viruses identified in the draft PRA to determine if they are seed transmitted in order to finalize the PRA. Assuming that methyl bromide treatment will be the pest mitigation, BA will provide research data on the effectiveness of that fumigant on Queensland fruit fly and Medfly.

Mangoes

APHIS identified a completion target date for the PRA for the end of 2003.

Irradiation/Tropical Fruit

APHIS will conduct separate risk assessments for each commodity depending upon the availability of resources.

Citrus-Riverland Extension

It has been included in the 11th Periodic Amendment and the publication date is still uncertain.

Citrus-Low Pest Areas

BA is in the process of finalizing the technical submission for these areas, and will provide it to APHIS when available. APHIS will determine if cold treatment disinfestations for fruit flies in low prevalence areas are acceptable, and how low prevalence areas can be defined.

Tomatoes-Greenhouse

It has been included in the 11th Periodic Amendment and the publication date is still uncertain.

Tomatoes-Field Grown

BA will provide an updated market access request.

Avocadoes

PRA will be conducted separately from other tropical fruits, and will be initiated as soon as resources are available.

Solid Wood Packing Materials

BA will adopt the IPPC standard once it becomes final. Until then, BA will maintain its current requirements. APHIS will alert BA when it is ready to issue a proposed new rule for public comment.

Next meeting date: BA and APHIS agreed to meet in 6 months time in Australia.